Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 24, 2021

The Honorable James E. Clyburn
Chairman
Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Clyburn and Chairwoman Maloney:

Last year, House Republicans repeatedly called for Democrats on the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis and the Committee on Oversight and Reform to join our effort to hold the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) accountable for its role in causing the global COVID-19 pandemic. In light of new evidence, and your ongoing refusal to acknowledge legitimate questions related to the CCP, we are writing to renew our long-standing request for a full investigation of China's liability.

In a series of letters and statements at public meetings, we shared evidence that the CCP obscured the virus' origins, manipulated the World Health Organization (WHO) to cover up the severity of the initial outbreak, and leveraged the crisis to steal American medical research, among other things. Repeatedly, we called for a full investigation to address those questions. Repeatedly, you ignored our requests.

In fact, at the very first meeting of the Select Subcommittee on May 13, 2020, Republicans called on Democrats to hold the CCP accountable for the spread of COVID-19.[1] Then, in a letter dated May 19, 2020, we stated House Democrats should bring investigative resources to bear on questions related to "why the Chinese government denied and downplayed the severity of the COVID-19 outbreak, and how China is now attempting to exploit the pandemic it caused."[2] That letter followed an April 30, 2020 request from Republican leaders on the Committee on Oversight and Reform for "immediate briefings, and hearings next month, on the [World Health Organization's] relationship with the Communist Party of China and its widely criticized response to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis."[3] Those letters are enclosed for your ready reference—they contain extensive evidence that the CCP denied and downplayed the severity of the COVID-19 outbreak, and exploited the pandemic to gain a strategic advantage.

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[1] *Testing, Tracing, And Targeted Containment: Briefing Before Select Subcomm. on the Coronavirus Crisis, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform,* 116th Cong. (May 13, 2020) (statement by Steve J. Scalise, Ranking Member).
[2] Letter from Steve J. Scalise, et. al., Ranking Member, Select Subcomm. on the Coronavirus Crisis, H. Comm. On Oversight & Reform, to James E. Clyburn, Chairman, Select Subcomm. on the Coronavirus Crisis, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform (May 19, 2020).
[3] Letter from Jim Jordan, et. al., then-Ranking Member, H. Comm. On Oversight & Reform, to Carolyn Maloney, Chairwoman, H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform (Apr. 30, 2020).

This matter is more urgent in light of a report yesterday that three researchers from China's Wuhan Institute of Virology became ill and sought hospital care in November 2019, according to U.S. intelligence sources.[4] It should concern Subcommittee Democrats that the Wuhan Institute is withholding "raw data, safety logs and lab records on its extensive work with coronaviruses in bats."[5] Indeed, the Biden Administration is concerned: regarding the intelligence report, a National Security Council spokesman said, "We continue to have serious questions about the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, including its origins within the People's Republic of China."[6]

The calls for a full and complete investigation of China's role are not limited to President Biden's National Security Council. Several senior Biden Administration officials have joined Republican calls for an impartial investigation of China and the WHO:

- Secretary of Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra said, "we have to understand how COVID-19 surfaced, we have to understand how it spread so we can try to make sure we are prepared for next time."[7]

- Chief Medical Advisor to President Biden Dr. Anthony Fauci, when asked if he was confident COVID-19 developed naturally, said, "no actually, I am not convinced about that, I think we should . . . investigate what went on in China."[8]

- After the WHO said a laboratory accident was "extremely unlikely," Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines said, "that is not [the Biden Administration's] assessment."[9]

- Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed similar concerns stating, "[w]e've got real concerns about the methodology and the process that went into [the WHO] report, including the fact that the government in Beijing apparently helped write it."[10]

In short, there is evidence the CCP started the pandemic, covered it up, and is responsible for the deaths of almost 600,000 Americans and millions more worldwide. These questions are

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[4] Michael R. Gordon, Warren P. Strobel, and Drew Hinshaw, *Intelligence on Sick Staff at Wuhan Lab Fuels Debate on Covid-19 Origin,* WALL ST. J., May 23, 2021, https://www.wsj.com/articles/intelligence-on-sick-staff-at-wuhan-lab-fuels-debate-on-covid-19-origin-11621796228.
[5] *Id.*
[6] *Id.*
[7] *The Fiscal Year 2022 HHS Budget: Hearing Before H. Comm. on Energy and Commerce,* 117th Cong. (May 12, 2021) (statement by Xavier Becerra, Sec'y, Dep't of Health & Human Servs.).
[8] Morgan Phillips, *Fauci 'not convinced' COVID-19 developed naturally,* FOX NEWS (May 23, 2021), https://www.foxnews.com/politics/fauci-not-convinced-covid-19-developed-naturally.
[9] Bill Gertz, *DNI Avril Haines knocks WHO report that dismissed theory COVID-19 escaped from lab,* WASH. EXAMINER (Apr. 15, 2021), https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/apr/15/avril-haines-william-burns-rip-who-report-covid-19/.
[10] Javier Hernandez, *The U.S. is concerned about China's influence over a report on the pandemic's origins,* N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 29, 2021), https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/29/world/the-us-is-concerned-about-chinas-influence-over-a-report-on-the-pandemics-origins.html.

not a diversion as Speaker Pelosi has stated—they get to truth and accountability. The House Democrat majority's refusal to follow the science, listen to the experts, and investigate the origins of COVID-19 raises serious questions about the credibility of the Select Subcommittee because we are uniquely positioned to find the truth, and seeking those answers is squarely within our mandated jurisdiction. In an apparent attempt to justify turning a blind eye to China's role in the COVID-19 pandemic, you claimed the Select Subcommittee "is not directed to focus on the origins of the virus."[11] This is not accurate. H. Res. 935, the Select Subcommittee's authorizing document, instructs the Select Subcommittee to "prepare for future pandemics" and investigate "any . . . issues related to the coronavirus crisis."[12] Investigating the origins of COVID-19 is clearly within the scope of this Subcommittee's jurisdiction, and we would be letting the American people down if we did not get answers to these critical questions. Even President Biden and others in the Biden Administration are now expressing the need for a full investigation into the CCP's actions.

The Democrat House majority's inactions, since the formation of the Select Subcommittee within the Committee on Oversight and Reform, appear intended to advance a political narrative at the expense of accountability for the CCP. We hope you will abandon this partisan agenda and join our investigation into the origins of COVID-19. This is one of the most important questions that demands answers. Thank you for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,

Steve J. Scalise
Ranking Member
Select Subcommittee on the
Coronavirus Crisis

James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform

Enclosures:

1. Letter from Hon. Steve J. Scalise, et. al., to Hon. James E. Clyburn (May 19, 2020).

2. Letter from Hon. Jim Jordan and Hon. James Comer, et. al., to Hon. Carolyn Maloney (Apr. 30, 2020).

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[11] Steven Nelson, *Republicans on House coronavirus panel want China ambassador to testify,* N.Y. POST (May 19, 2020), https://nypost.com/2020/05/19/republicans-on-house-coronavirus-panel-want-china-ambassador-to-testify/.
[12] H. Res. 935(3)(a)(3), (10).